

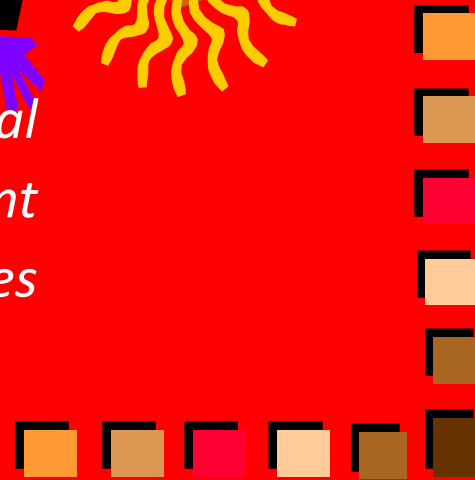
# *Creating Opportunities For All To Dance Together*



*Aarti Sahgal*

*Diversity Consultant*

*Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities*





***“All the ways we are different  
and similar --- both seen and  
unseen”***

# Tension/Complexity

## *Tension . . .*

is the feeling of pressure or tautness we experience when faced with a situation which challenges us in some way.

Tension is neither inherently good nor bad. It may come in the form of anxiety, stress or excitement, depending on the situation.

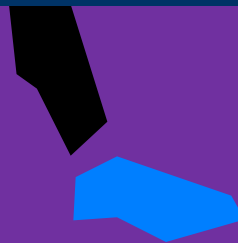
**Diversity Tension . . .**  
results from the dynamics of the differences and similarities in the elements of the mixture.

## How diverse capable are we?

# WORLD CAFE



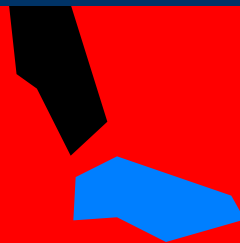
What does an inclusive community look like?



# WORLD CAFE

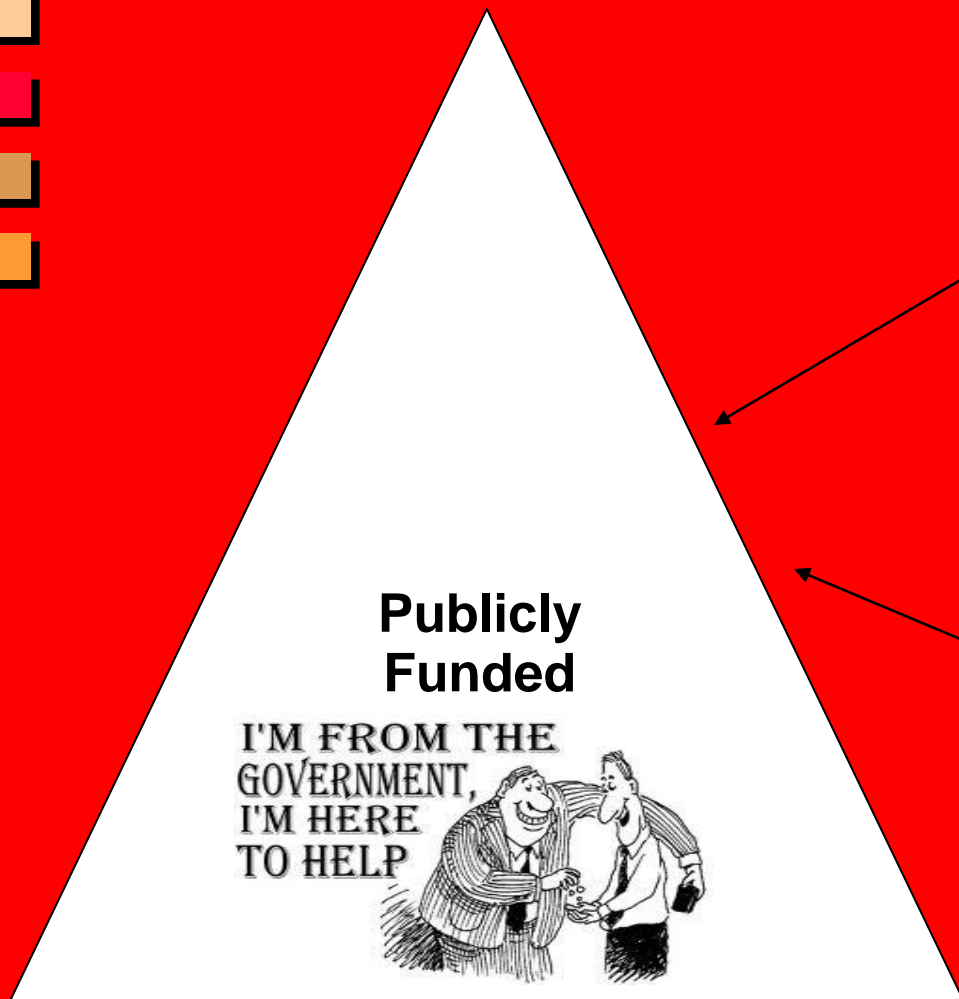


What assumptions do we make to move to an inclusive community?



Who we become together will always be different than who we are alone. Our range of creative expression increases as we join with others. **Relationships create new capacity.** – Meg Wheatly





What we know is that there is something wrong in communities that must change to allow all people to belong

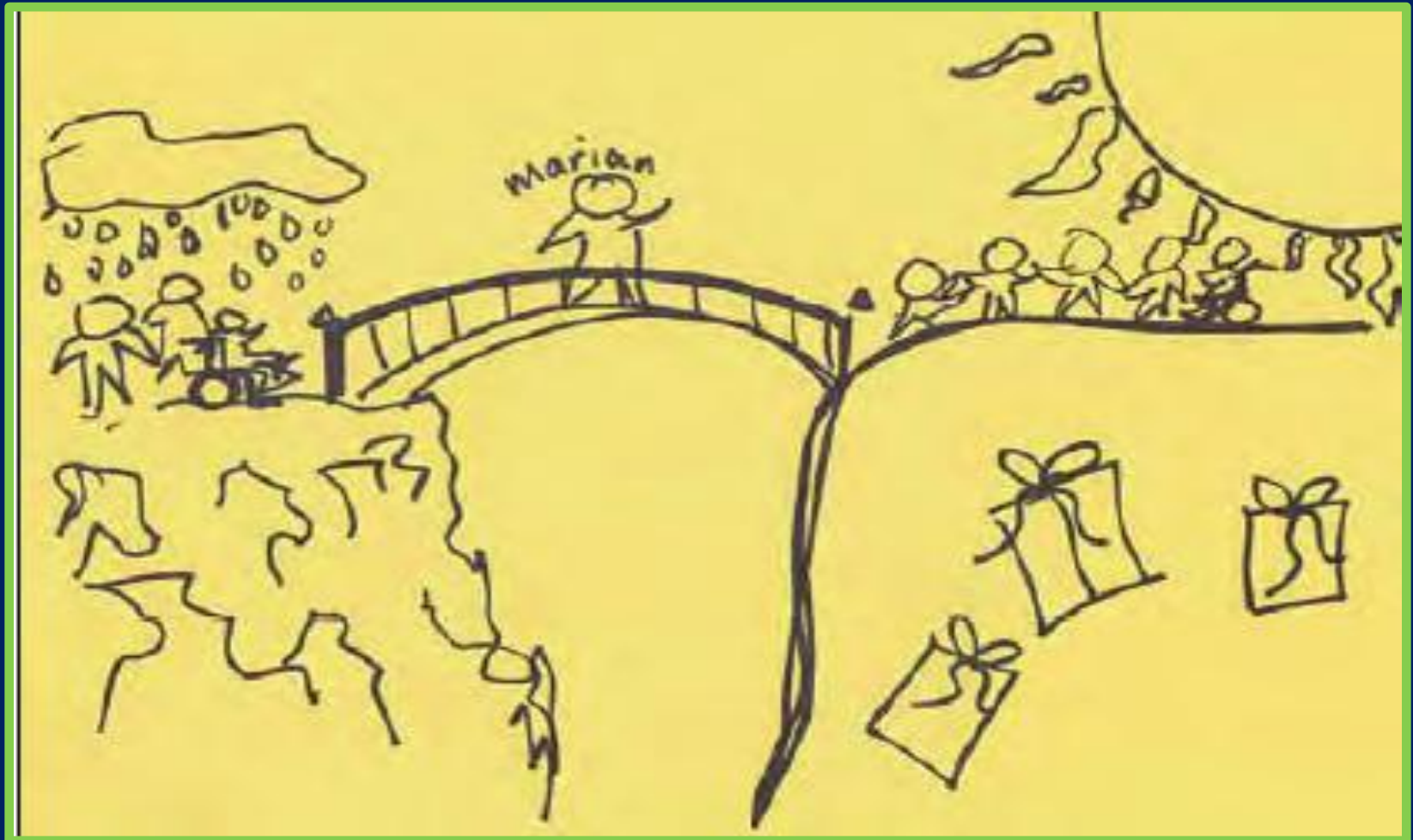


How do we change communities?

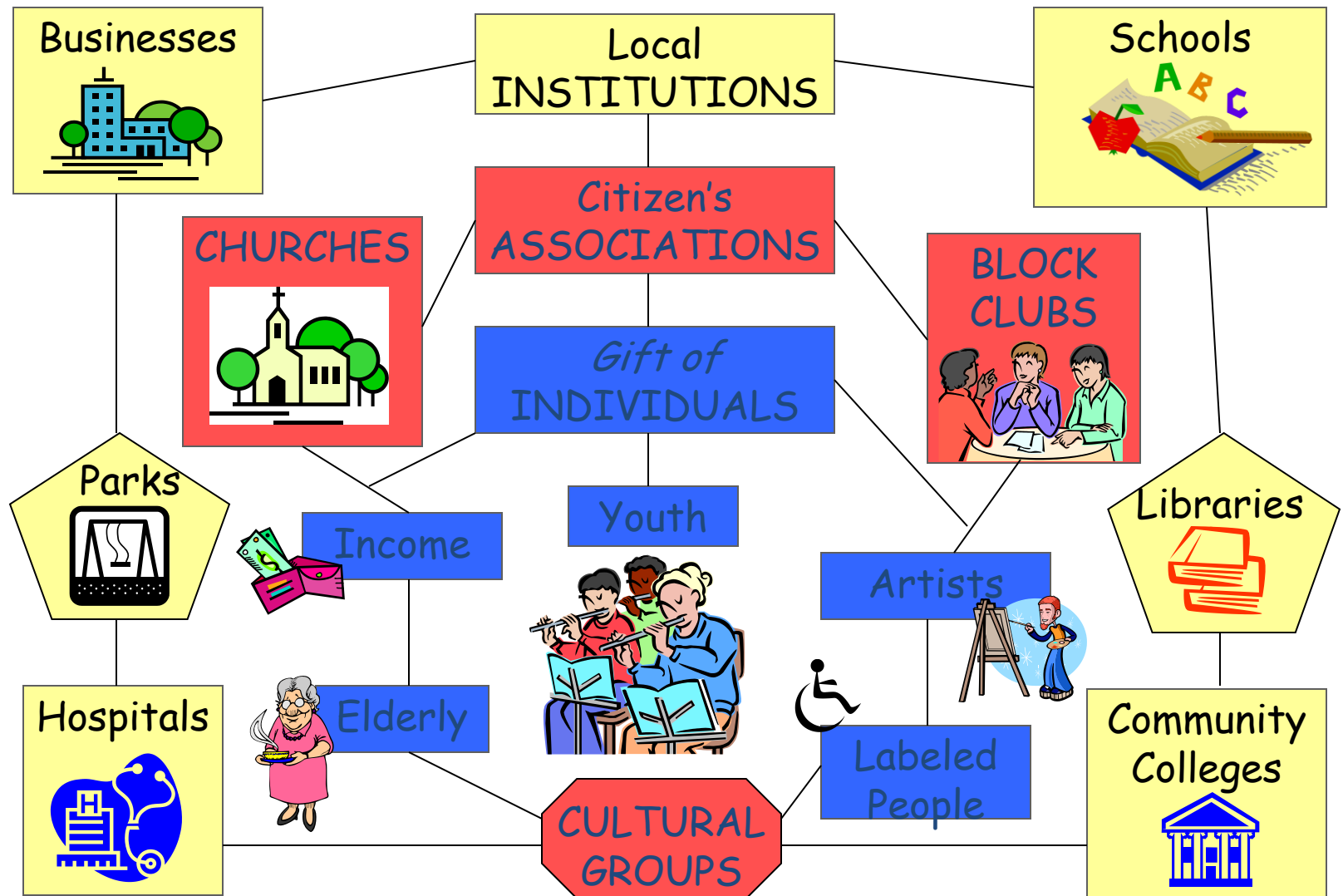
How do we connect people with developmental disabilities



# Real Communities – A Way Of Thinking



# Community Assets



# STRATEGY OF REAL COMMUNITIES

**What works? Pay attention to  
Assets not needs**

**Never do something no  
one wants**

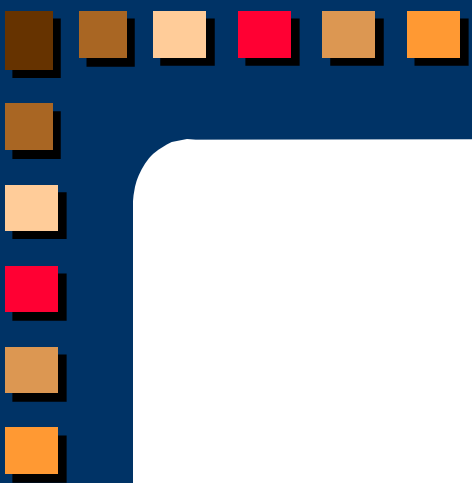
**What do people want  
their visions.....**

**Work from inside out. Start with  
a question & never an answer**

**Have meaningful conversations**

**Answer to every question is a learning  
conversation**

**Question: who is  
Not at table?**



# Components of Real Communities

**Community Builder:** one in every community.  
connector, listener, resilient, passionate, adaptive,  
creative & organized

**Design Team:** GCDD staff & consultants;  
questioning & challenging

**Learning Circles:** Meet quarterly to  
share, raise issues, tackle challenges &  
connect dots

**Core Group:** local circle of support for  
each community builder

**Learning Journeys**





# CLARKSTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



THE MOST DIVERSE COMMUNITY IN AMERICA

A



at Clarkston, GA

- The most culturally diverse area in Georgia
- 81% of population is non white
- Majority of people are refugees & immigrants from Somalia, Vietnam, Sudan, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iraq & many more
- Median household and individual income is lower than the state median income



# How Do We Build A Community?

Tensions between old & new  
residents

Devaluation & helplessness; “lab rats”

Multiple power dynamics between & within different  
communities, families & individuals







# How Do We Build A Community?

Lack of basic services – housing, health & education

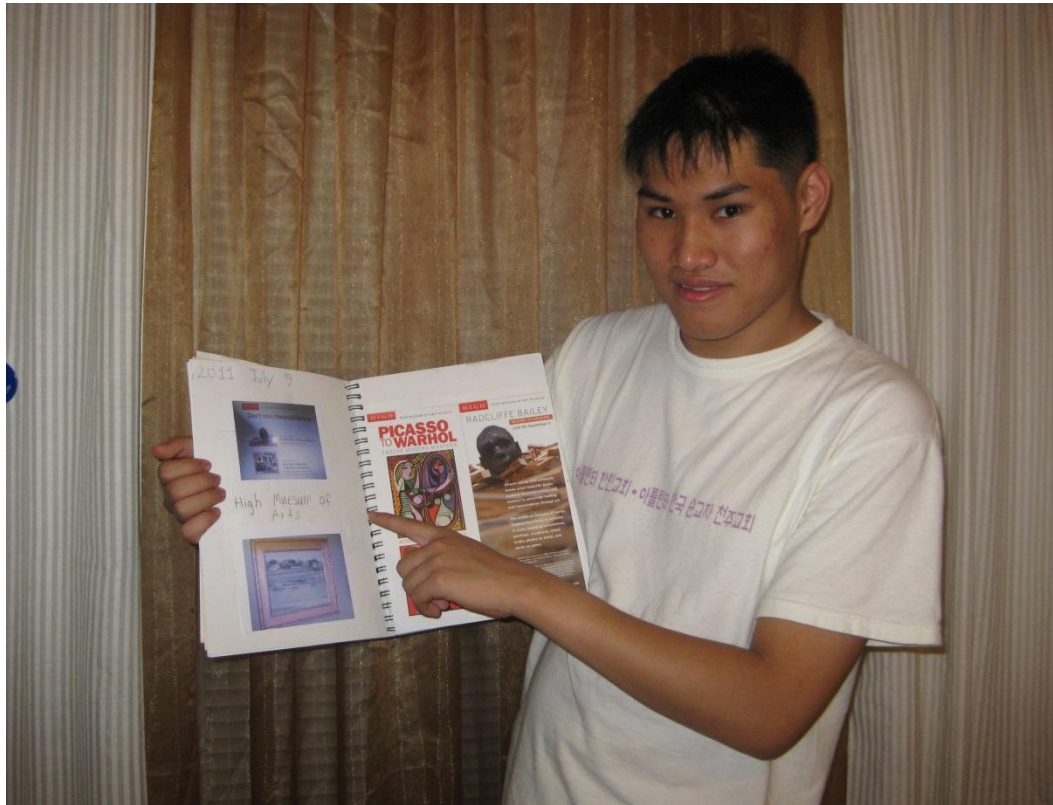
**People with disabilities are invisible**

**LACK OF CONNECTIVITY**





# Korean Coalition





# Korean Coalition

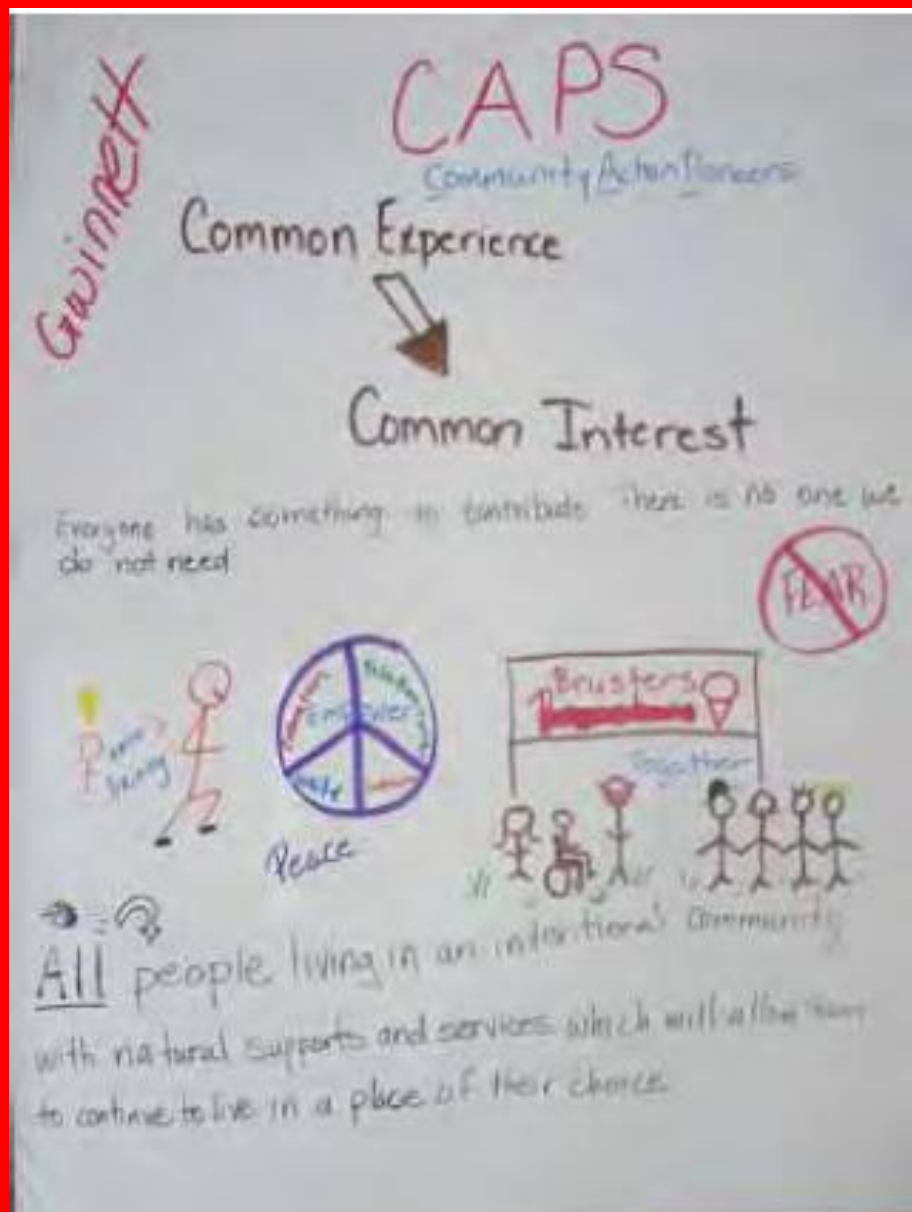


# Milton





# Gwinnett Time Bank



# What have we learnt?

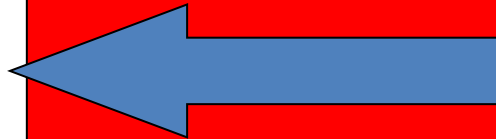
Hard to shift direction from  
“I” to “we”

Difficult to connect people with DD  
& outside world

How do we build  
right connections &  
right assistance

People with DD have  
No control over  
their lives

People are conditioned to  
service mentality



# What have we learned?

Share stories; share food

Go on Learning  
Journeys & harvest  
them

Seeing is believing

What do you do when community builder  
becomes the community “gate keeper”

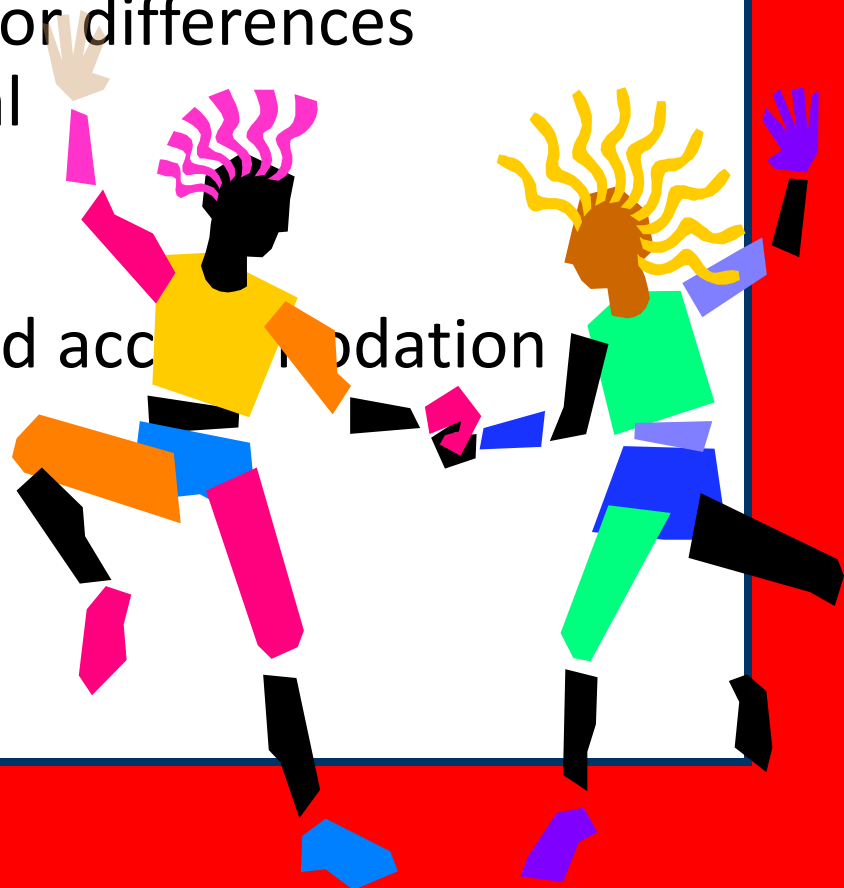
Honor the positive deviance



# Ground Rules



Relationships, relationships & more relationships  
listen with your heart  
Focus on similarities & honor differences  
Moved towards shared goal  
Be flexible  
Discard the stereotype  
Follow thru on supports and accommodation  
Keep your language simple  
Stay person centered  
Ensure accessibility





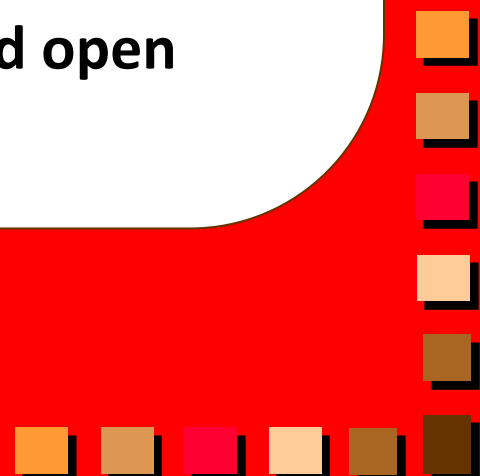
# The discussion begins with us


**IF:**

Our responsibility is to build a welcoming community where people with developmental disabilities and without disabilities have positive, equal and open relationships

**THEN:**

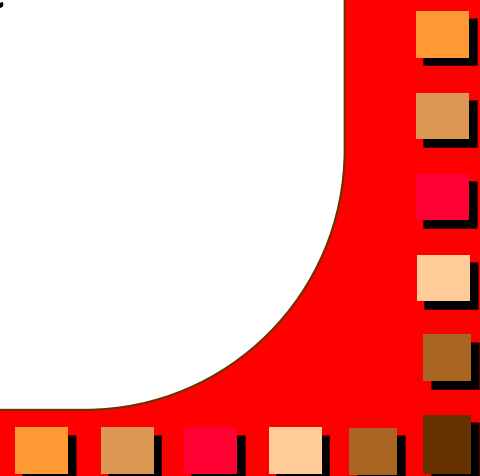
**Before we can succeed in our goal, we must have the skills and knowledge to have positive and open relationships with one another**





If you don't know the kind of person I am  
and I don't  
know the kind of person you are, then a  
pattern that  
others made may prevail in the world.

The pattern  
that others made may prevail in the world and  
following the wrong god home  
we may miss our star.



*Thank You*

